endothelial cells, in particular of blood vessels, epithelial cells, glial cells and tumor cells or cells derived from tumor cell lines.

10. (Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the detection of the fusogenic power of said protein consists in:

obtaining a vector for expression of said protein, based on which the expression of the protein or of its gene is under the control of a promoter, preferably a strong promoter, transfecting cells with the vector obtained, so as to obtain producer cells expressing, at their surface, said protein, and observing the formation of syncytia or the absence of formation of syncytia.

11. (Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the detection of the fusogenic power of the protein consists in: obtaining a vector for expression of said protein, based on which the expression of the protein or of its gene is under the control of a promoter, preferably a strong promoter, transfecting cells with the vector obtained, so as to obtain producer cells expressing, at their surface, said protein, coculturing naïve indicator cells, expressing, at their surface, a receptor for said protein, in the presence of said producer cells, and observing the formation of syncytia or the absence of formation of syncytia.

A2

15. (Amended) The use as claimed in claim 12, characterized in that the composition is intended for treatment by gene therapy.

A3

16. (Amended) A therapeutic or prophylactic composition comprising a fragment of gene or of nucleic acid coding for a polypeptide as defined in claim 7.

18. (Amended) An expression vector comprising at least one fragment of gene or of nucleic acid coding for a polypeptide as defined in claim 7, and elements required for its expression in a host cell.

A4

25. (Amended) A gene therapy vector comprising a polypeptide as defined in claim 7.

A5

27. (Amended) A therapeutic composition comprising, inter alia, a therapy vector as defined in claim 25, and an antisense nucleic acid sequence or oligonucleotide.

28. (Amended) A therapeutic composition comprising, inter alia, a therapy vector as defined in claim 25, and a gene of therapeutic interest.

Q6

29. (Amended) A therapeutic composition comprising, inter alia, a cellular vector comprising a cell expressing a protein or a polypeptide as defined in claim 1.

30. (Amended) A method for selecting medicinal substances or drugs, or gene/prodrug systems, capable of having a qualitative and/or quantitative effect on the fusogenic power of a protein or of a polypeptide as defined in claim 1, according to which said medicinal substance or drug, or said gene/prodrug system, is brought into contact with cells of a cell culture expressing said protein or said polypeptide, and a regression or a disappearance of the formation of syncytia is observed.

31. (Amended) A therapeutic composition comprising, inter alia, an antisense nucleic acid sequence or oligonucleotide capable of hybridizing to a gene or a fragment of gene, or to a nucleic acid or fragment of nucleic acid, coding for a protein or a polypeptide as defined claim 1.

34. (Amended) The use as claimed in claim 32, characterized in that the [lacuna] a ligand chosen from a monoclonal antibody, a polyclonal antibody, a transmembrane antibody or a fragment of said antibodies, and an inhibitory molecule, said ligand being specific for the receptor of the protein defined in SEQ ID No. 1.

Q7

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 34 are pending. By this Preliminary Amendment, claims 21-24 and 26 are cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. By this Preliminary Amendment, claims 3,9-11,15,16,18,25,27-31 and 34 are amended to